

LITTLE BLUE BOOK NO. 839
Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius

Anatole France:
The Man and His Work

Dr. Will Durant -



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CONTENTS

	Page
1. The Paradox	3
2. The Man	4
3. The Conservative	13
4. The Epicurean	18
5. The Sceptic	25
6. The Socialist	37
7. The Artist	54
8. The Last Phase.....	58

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ANATOLE FRANCE: THE MAN AND HIS WORK

I. THE PARADOX

"Had I been nature," said Anatole France, "I should have made men and women not to resemble the great apes, as they do, but on the model of the insects which, after a lifetime as caterpillars, change into butterflies, and for the brief final term of their existence have no thought but to love and be lovely. I should have set youth at the end of the human span . . . Then I should have arranged that man and woman, unfurling glittering wings, would live awhile on dew and desire and die in a rapturous kiss."¹

Perhaps that is just what nature did in the case of Anatole France. Most of us retreat from life into books, enshrining our timidity in an ivory tower; Anatole France grew out of books into life, and stepped out of a scholarly peace into the hazardous vicissitudes of action. Most of us begin as eloquent radicals and end as hushed conservatives; our interest in reform decreases as our interest in the bank grows. But Anatole France began with the deadliest conservatism, and persisted in it till fifty; then, at an age when most minds are dead, he turned his face toward the rising sun, and allied himself with liberal forces everywhere. At forty-four, when Spinoza died and Nietzsche went insane, Anatole France joined the staff of *Le Temps*, the most respectable journal in France; at fifty-two he was elected to the

French Academy as the conservative rival of a mildly liberal candidate; at seventy-four he joined the Communists, and gave his Nobel prize of 40,000 francs to Russian relief. He was an octogenarian at forty, and at eighty he had the rebellious optimism of youth. He lived again for a while on dew and desire; and refused to die until he was young.

How shall we explain this anomaly? Had this kind old man drunk at some mystic fountain of perpetual youth? How could the indolent sceptic of *La Vie litteraire* become the warrior of *The Church and the Republic*?—how could the indulgent humorist of *The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard* become the audacious revolutionary of *Towards Better Times* and *On the White Stone*?—how could the secluded bookworm, entombed in the dust of libraries with the spirits of the ancient dead, come forth to battle against priest and soldier and imperialist for liberty and peace?

Let us study Anatole in his growth, through each stage of his development; perhaps thereby we shall come to understand the paradox of his genius, and the secret of his eternal youth.

II. THE MAN

Anatole Jacques Thibault was born on April 16, 1844.² He was a son of Paris, and took the pseudonym of France: nothing could better sum him up. He speaks of himself as "Parisian with all his soul and with all his body," and as loving Paris with "an immense love."³ He is the voice of the city of his birth: of Paris that has seen all and *nil admiratur*,

that has known every hope and suffered every defeat, that has tasted every philosophy and sipped at every sin; Paris the inheritor and focus of the culture and wisdom and beauty of the Western world.

"We were already so old when we were born," he says.⁴ And not by biological heredity only: behind him, ready to seep into his osmotic soul, lay all the wealth of his country's literature and art. "Our French culture is the noblest and most delicate thing in the world," he wrote,⁵ in one of those frequent passages of tender patriotism which made his country love him even when he denounced the leaders who manoeuvred it into war and kept it from reconciliation and peace. This French culture was the breast that nourished him; and he sucked it almost dry. No one knew that culture, or Latin culture in general, better than he. He knew little of German or English literature, and had nothing of what Renan called "the heavy hyperborean" about him. He was all French and Latin and Greek; like the memory in Bergson's philosophy, he carried the past with him and summed it up; and when he spoke it was the voice of France. In him we see the profound continuity of French culture: he had the broad laughter of Rabelais, the kindly humor of Montaigne, the subtle satire of Voltaire; in *The Rotisserie of the Reine Pedauque* he is Rabelais, in *La Vie litteraire* he is Montaigne, in *Penguin Isle* he is Voltaire, in *The Garden of Epicurus* he is Renan, in the Trublet of the *Comic History* we see the Graindorge of Taine, and in *Thais* we are in

the deserts of monastic Egypt with the Flaubert who wrote *The Temptation of St. Anthony*. There is in all these men a tender disillusionment, an urban sophistication, an appreciation of the subtleties and nuances of life, a pagan simplicity and unashamedness in joy, a refinement of artistic sensibility and touch, which make them an unrivaled dynasty in modern letters. And Anatole France is their inheritor, their reincarnation, and their sum.

He had a right, then, to the great name which he assumed; his real name will be lost forever in the glare of his pseudonym. The *nom-de-plume* came down to him from his father, François Noël Thibault, whose friends called him France for short. The father was a pious Catholic and an unrelenting royalist of Vendéen traditions, who had served in the guard of Charles X and fallen with his fall. He taught his son the Bourbon creed and retailed to him the unlovelier phases of the French Revolution; it took Anatole half a century to outgrow his influence, which lingers on in *The Gods Are Athirst* (1912). Different indeed was the paternal grandmother, neither pious nor royalist, but keen-witted, pagan, and Voltairean; "she had no more piety than a bird; clearly she belonged to the eighteenth century."⁶

It was difficult for the father to bring up the boy in the traditions, for he kept a bookshop on the Quai Malaquais, just across from the Louvre, and the boy grew up in the midst of books that sparkled with heresy. At Anatole's cradle worshipped all the genii of lit-

terature; and almost in his front yard the world had collected the masterpieces of its art. Everything had conspired to lay upon Anatole France the obligation to become a scholar, an artist, and a philosopher.

In his reminiscent volumes—*The Book of My Friend* (1885), *Pierre Noziere* (1899) and *Petit Pierre* (1915)—he has told the story of those boyhood days with delightful naïveté; perhaps he remained young because he was always refreshing his memories of youth. "My cosmography was immense. . . . The earth formed a large circle round my house. Every day I would meet, coming and going in the streets, people who seemed occupied with a strange and amusing game, the game of life. I decided that there were a great many of them, perhaps more than a hundred." After a time he went farther afield; his nurse took him to the Zoological Gardens, which he mistook for the Garden of Eden; for had not his mother described Eden as "a very pleasant place, with beautiful trees, and all the animals of creation in it?" The only difference was that here "the animals were confined behind iron bars as a result of the progress of civilization . . . and the angel who guarded the entrance with a flaming sword had given place to a soldier with red breeches."⁷

At a very tender age he was initiated into the arcana of sex by a little girl called Alphonsine. "I am grateful to Alphonsine for having vastly added, when I was but two years old, to my knowledge of human nature."⁸ He was an apt pupil, and maintained through-

out his life the advantages of this early start in the science of Eros. He represents himself, with proud exaggeration, as a very bad boy; once his mother caught him in some naughtiness; "her cheeks were flushed, and she looked at me askance, scanning my face to see whether she could detect the symptoms of incipient crime or madness."⁹ Apparently his greatest crime was curiosity; at six years of age, he tells us, "I was already tormented by that vast curiosity which was to become the trouble and the joy of my life, and which was to devote me to the quest of that which one never finds."¹⁰

He went to school, but he learnt less there than in the streets. "Of all the schools I ever went to, Dr. Truant's was the one in which I got on best and learned the most."¹¹ Next in value came the book-shops.

"I was brought up on the quays, where the old books form part of the landscape. . . . If the Seine is the river of glory, we may surely admit that the books ranged upon the quays made for it a fitting coronal. . . . When all is said and done I know of no sweeter, gentler pleasure than to go book-hunting along the quays of Paris. . . . From these lonely abodes you may evoke the spirits of the departed as with an enchanter's wand. . . . For my part I have found wisdom there. All those piles of paper begrimed with printer's ink have taught me the vanity of triumphs that fade, of glory which blossoms but to die. . . . O sordid old Jews, candid book-sellers of the quays, my masters, what gratitude I owe you! More than the professors of the University, . . . you spread before my delighted eyes the mysterious forms of a

past life, and every sort of precious monument of the thought of man."¹²

So we picture him "passing from book to book like bees among the flowers, while the indifferent pendulum of the clock kept chopping off the seconds of life calmly and precisely." It was in these shops and hours that he laid the basis of that astonishingly ecumenical learning which so modestly hides behind his perfect art. He led in those days "the quiet imaginative life of an only child;" books and women brought him up, making him a tender and sensitive bibliophile, almost an alien on the earth. His father objected to the boy's meditative habits: "Solitude," he said, "excites the imagination." It never occurred to him that nature had chosen out his son to be an artist of the imagination; and he forgot that activity dulls imagination as much as imagination dulls activity. Active boys seldom become geniuses, not even geniuses of action. And Anatole France had made up his mind to be a genius.

"At the very tenderest age I was possessed by a longing to win renown and to live eternally in the memory of mankind. . . . Had I been able, I would have gone forth to win glory on the battlefield. . . . But I had no horse, no uniform, no regiment, no enemies; and all these are essential to military glory. It therefore occurred to me that I would become a saint. The outfit is less elaborate than that required for a military career."¹³

This was the result, presumably, of a daily diet of hagiography, of being fed, unremittingly, on the lives of the saints; a more per-

manent result was that Anatole became an expert in medieval legend, and pained the priests with his erudition.—So one day he refused breakfast, gave away all his toys, ruined his best hat as self-mortification (whereupon his mother began to have some doubts about religion), and made himself a hair-shirt by stuffing the padding of an arm-chair down his back.

Like Renan and Lemaitre, he was sent to a Jesuit school—the College Stanislas; “in the Temple were forged the hammers which destroyed the Temple.”¹⁴ He liked the life there, except the weekly confession, which irked him because he had no sins to tell. He consulted the list of sins in the prayer-book, and found monstrous things like “simony,” “prevarication,” and “concupiscence”; he decided to accuse himself of these for lack of something milder; but at the last moment his courage failed him at the thought that the priest might ask him what these words meant. He was forced to admit, shamefacedly, that he had committed no sins at all.

In *The Flower of Life* (1920) he tells of a crucial point in his career at college, the “bifurcation” when the student was obliged to choose between the sciences and the classics. He asked the advice of the servant girl about this “bifurcation,” but he could not shake her conviction that this was either a wild beast or a terrible disease. He consulted his parents; and they, strange to say, let him make his own choice. “My mother had no doubt that whatever path I chose I should display my

ever-smouldering if sometimes hidden genius, while my father considered that in letters as in science I should never amount to anything." His own opinion was that the bifurcation was an absurdity. "No matter what choice we made, our minds were bound to suffer serious injury; for science isolated from letters remains mechanical and brutal, and letters without science are empty, since science is the substance of literature." He thought that our ruling bourgeoisie fail of statesmanship because their minds are trained in mechanisms only, not in the humanities; he believed that a little Greek and more Latin should be required at college; and he was sure that a man who had no acquaintance with classic culture was unfit for rule.

"I chose to take the arts, because they seemed to float along more easily. . . . Instinct did not altogether deceive me. In these sordid rooms Greece and Rome appeared to me; Greece which taught men science and beauty, and Rome which gave peace to the world. . . . You may call me a mandarin or an aristocrat, but I believe that six or seven years of literary culture give to the mind prepared to receive it a nobility, a force and a beauty which is not to be obtained by any other means."¹⁵

Perhaps it was this revelation of a polished pagan culture that undermined Anatole's faith in the dogmas of Catholicism, just as a similar revelation helped to paganize Renaissance Italy. Add to this that Taine and Bernard had made determinism and Darwinism the order of the day; that Anatole read Darwin and

Spencer and became a fiery evolutionist, making the Museum his temple and following there the transformations of life from mollusc to man.¹⁶ Now he took a passionate interest in science, worked his way through physics, astronomy, geology and anthropology, and founded upon them what he thought to be an unassailable system of philosophy. What with all this philosophy and science, the poet in him lost his wings; and after two volumes of verse he wrote his poetry in prose. Perhaps it was because he went through this poetic apprenticeship that he became the finest master of his language in his generation. One must be a poet to write good prose.

Meanwhile his transition from Catholicism to an agnostic Darwinism had not been quite smooth. In *The Desires of Jean Servien* (1882) he recalls something of the tortures of a soul caught in the ebb of faith; he describes the successive changes, each unconscious, by which Jean became a pagan: how on the day of his graduation his proud parents (who expected him to become a priest) treated him to an evening at the theatre, only to have him fall madly and naturally in love with the leading lady; how love and piety and doubt fought a desolating war for the soul of Jean Servien; how they led him to every manner of contradictory desires, to an almost Russian alternation of hope and despair, and at last to suicide. Like Goethe in *Werther*, Anatole France killed himself by proxy, and lived to tell the tale.

III. THE CONSERVATIVE

After graduation he was made librarian and reader for the publishing firm of Lemerre; and in 1876 he became librarian of the French senate. These occupations confirmed his scholastic habits, and addicted him still further to classic culture. Asked later why his own library contained so few modern authors, he replied that he seldom read his contemporaries, since what they could tell him he knew quite well himself, and through the more trustworthy medium of direct experience. In the quiet of these libraries and his home (he married in the eighties) he produced the four novels of what we shall call his first period: *Jocasta and the Famished Cat* (1879), *The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard* (1881), *The Desires of Jean Servien* (1882), and *The Book of My Friend* (1885). The last is a picture of childhood, the second a picture of old age; each picture so intimate and real that the world could hardly believe that both portraits had been drawn by the same hand, almost at the same age.

Bonnard, the aged and honored member of the Institute, lives a life of modest research in his library, competing with his cat for the one comfortable chair. At times he wanders about Europe collecting scholarly antiquities, and modestly accepting as his equal in scientific dignity Mme. Trepoff, who collects match-boxes. We find him even as far from home as Sicily, buying watermelon-slices from a persuasive peddler who cries: "*Co tra calle vive, magna, e*

lava la faccia—"For three cents you eat drink, and wash your face."¹⁷ But in all these studies and these wanderings his mind is not quite on his manuscripts and his old editions; he cannot forget that the daughter of the dead woman whom, many years since, he had vainly but faithfully loved, is pining away friendless in an oppressive convent. He has no legal right to make himself the guardian of this girl; and it is his crime that he steals her away in the dark of night, and takes her to his home. Through many years he lavishes every fond care upon her. Then the inevitable wooer comes; and old Bonnard sees his prize slipping away from him, leaving him more solitary than before. He makes no complaint, but blesses the pair of lovers, and sells his only property—the library which he has spent a lifetime in collecting, and whose every book he loves—to provide the girl with a fit dowry. And when she is gone, old Bonnard, derelict of two passions, turns back empty-hearted to his empty study, only to find that his cat has taken his chair.

This was an unusual story, whose tenderness and delicacy sharply marked it off from other books in an age when French literature was experimenting with the sixth commandment, and every novel expounded adultery. At one step Anatole France became a classic; and the most powerful of Parisian newspapers, *Le Temps*, offered him irresistible inducements to write for it a weekly column of literary comment. These are the essays which have been gathered together as *La Vie litteraire* ("On

Life and Letters"),—volumes of frankly subjective, impressionistic criticism, full of delight for the lover of the literature of France. These four years with *Le Temps* (1888-92) made Anatole France the leader of French letters; and when, in 1892, Ernest Renan died, the new critic, already forty-eight years of age, succeeded unquestioned to the throne of the world of Latin culture.

It was an aristocratic, a disillusioned, and a somewhat dilettante culture. Anatole France recognized, at this time, only one sin: and that was lack of taste. "Without taste one shocks even those who have none";¹⁸ an error of style is more horrible than a violation of the criminal code. He condemned Zola for tastelessness, and in such unmeasured language as seldom mars his pages.¹⁹ His ideal at this period was *aequanimitas*—the motto of Spinoza, who practised it, and of Nietzsche, who did not. He liked to live in an almost monastic seclusion, and called himself "a philosophical monk who at heart belongs to the Abbey of Thelema."²⁰

The secret of tranquillity, he thought, was to live with the select souls of the past; and he described his critiques as the adventures of his soul among masterpieces. Yet he learned, from the endlessness of books, their near-futility. "Never do I turn over the contents of the penny-box" at the book-store (where are there penny-boxes now?), "but a calm and gentle melancholy steals into my heart, and I say, 'What avails it to add yet a few more pages to this mass of ink-stained paper? Surely it were better to write no more?'"²¹ His famous

story of the happy shirt preached an almost Rousseauian, simplicity: an unhappy king, told by a soothsayer that he can never regain bliss till he acquires the shirt of a happy man, sends his aides into every corner of his realm to find such a man; they seek among courtiers and financiers and lovers and generals and artists and philosophers, but are everywhere met with confessions of secret misery; and when at last they find a man who professes happiness, they discover that he is a hermit who lives in the woods on the natural growths of the soil, and has no shirt.

At last, like a grandson of Voltaire, Anatole France came to the gospel of *Candide*: "I believe it is wiser to plant cabbages than to write books. . . . Books are the opium of the West. They devour us. . . . Believe me when I tell you this, for I adore books, I long since gave myself unreservedly to them."²² And he described with envy the corn-threshers in the field:

"What is my task by the side of theirs? And how humble and petty I feel myself before them! What they do is necessary. And we, frivolous jugglers, vain flute-players! Happy the man and the ox who trace out their furrow straight! All the rest is madness, or at least uncertainty, a cause of trouble and cares. The workmen that I see from my window will today thresh three hundred trusses of corn, and then they will go to bed tired and satisfied, without doubting the goodness of their work. Oh, the joy of performing an exact and regular task! But I, shall I know this evening, when my ten pages are written, whether I have filled my

day well and earned my sleep? Shall I know whether I have carried the good grain into the barn? Shall I know if my words are the bread of life?"²³

Loving quiet and regular existence, he inclined by nature to the conservatism, the love of tradition, of the peasants whom he so admired (and who, no doubt, would have smiled at his supposition that they were free from trouble and care). He knew too much of the past to be easily excited about the future. Everything had been tried. The thing to be sought was not Utopia but stability; culture could flourish only under strong and stable governments. His friends at this time were all of the conservative ranks—priests and generals and diplomats; if later he described them well it was because he had known them well. When an anti-militaristic novel, *Le Cavalier Miserey*, was published, and some copies were bought by French soldiers, Anatole France quoted with approval the censorious edict of an army officer, that "every copy of *Le Cavalier Miserey* seized in the barracks should be burned on the dung-heap, and every soldier found with it should be punished with imprisonment." "It is not a very elegant phrase," said Anatole France; ". . . but I should be better pleased to have written it than to have written the four hundred pages of *Le Cavalier Miserey*. For I am sure that it is of infinitely greater value to my country."²⁴ One July 14th he described with enthusiasm the review of the troops on the national holiday, and ended his article with the patriotic phrase, "Vive l'armée!" Ten years later he was to

look on in bitterness and sorrow as the rabble of Paris, incited by the enemies of Dreyfus and Zola, stood before his house and shouted that phrase into his face.

IV. THE EPICUREAN

A long life was the salvation of Anatole France; it gave him a leisurely development through a half-century of adolescence. At an age when most creators have finished their life-work he turned suddenly from the orthodoxies and traditions, and began to produce one masterpiece after another. At forty-six he wrote his finest work, *Thaïs*; at forty-eight his finest short-story, "The Procurator of Judea" (in *Mother of Pearl*); at forty-nine his most enjoyable book, *The Rotisserie of the Reine Pédauque*; and at fifty his philosophic masterpiece, *The Garden of Epicurus*. Add to these *The Opinions of Jérôme Coignard* (1893), *The Red Lily* (1894), and *The Human Tragedy* (1895), and we may safely describe this second period, from 1890 to 1895, as marking the zenith of Anatole France's productivity and power.

Thaïs is the story of an actress and a saint. All Alexandria is talking about the dancing of *Thaïs*, even though it is the Alexandria of the second century A. D., burning with religious zeal, and echoing with monastic denunciations from the Thebaïd. Rich and poor alike are slaves to *Thaïs*' charms: the philosophers dispute about her beauty; "the porters, sweepers, and dock-laborers went without bread and garlic that they might pay for their places" when

she danced.²⁵ Meanwhile, in the desert, the holy monk Paphnutius, who had once loved Thaïs, cannot rid himself of the memory of her; his re-awakened desire rationalizes itself into an ambition to convert her to Christ and sanctity; and despite his abbot's warning, he leaves his cell and makes his way to Alexandria. It is Anatole's delight to show how piety can be the mask of lust, and how ecclesiastical codes and moral battlements fall before the insistence of natural desires.

Paphnutius finds Thaïs in the midst of her artistocratic admirers, whose subtle discussions offer a splendid intellectual foil to the emotionalism of the monk. The courtesan professes to despise his sermons, and like another Aphrodite to another Hippolytus, warns him of Venus' revenge for his scorn of love—is it not for love that man is born, and how else shall existence be redeemed? But Paphnutius, though his soul is parched with desire, pretends to scorn her charms; and the more he scorns her the more she secretly inclines to yield to his demand that she bury herself, for atonement, in a nunnery. As the man has followed beauty ("Surely," says Anatole, "beauty is the most powerful force in the world"), so the woman follows what she thinks is strength. She is tired of her slavish lovers and their stereotyped compliments; what a novelty it is to have a man whip her with commands! So she follows Paphnutius back into the desert and enters a convent, while the victorious monk returns to his cell.

But he has made the mistake of taking his

body with him; and now it torments him ceaselessly with sensual images and dreams. A spirit appears to him and reveals to him the truth which he has ignored: "You cannot escape me: I am the beauty of woman. Whither do you think to fly from me, senseless fool? You will find my likeness in the radiance of the flowers, and in the grace of the palm-trees; in the flight of pigeons, in the bounds of the gazelle, in the rippling of brooks, in the soft light of the moon; and if you close your eyes you will find me within yourself."²⁶ At last "the dream has more power than the reality;"²⁷ Paphnutius rushes out of his cell and across the desert, forces his way into the convent, only to find Thaïs dying a saintly death. He catches her in his arms, and discovers that he is holding a corpse. The holy nuns, scandalized by this resurrection of the flesh, drive him out into the desert, where he wanders through the night, mad.

Never in all literature had the triumph of the body over the soul, of the Epicurean and pagan spirit over the Stoic and Christian, been traced more subtly, or with such grace and melody of style. Here the artist is more than the philosopher, and the Epicurean creed is hinted at rather than professed. But in the other novels of this period—*The Rotisserie of the Reine Pédauque* and *The Opinions of Jérôme Coignard*—the sensual interest gets the upper hand over the artist, and for a time Anatole France revels Rabelaisianly. The Rotisserie of the Club-foot Queen is kept by the parents of Jacques Tournebroche; they

have marked him out for the priesthood, but instead he falls into the hands of Jérôme Coignard and two girls who have more beauty than virtue. The girls torture Jacques with their infidelity—"Do you suppose," the lovelier one asks him, "that it is so easy to be a pretty girl without causing unhappiness?";—while Coignard consoles him with philosophy. This jolly abbé is the most successful of all the portraits in Anatole France, barring, perhaps, M. Bergeret. He is a priest out of a job, whose perpetually falling trousers reflect (if trousers ever reflect) the looseness of his morals; his soul is torn between a sensual love for young women and an intellectual passion for old books. "What is woman compared with an Alexandrian papyrus?" he asks, the night before his love-affair with the sweetheart of his pupil. Against him stands the ascetic alchemist, d'Astarac, who scorns women and loves only science and salamanders. "Every union of the sexes, far from assuring immortality to lovers, is an evidence of death, and we should never know love if we were destined to live forever." And d'Astarac continues, Shavianly: "I have promised myself, with the help of science, notably to prolong human life, and to spread it over five or six centuries at least." He does not like the pleasures of the senses; eating is a deplorable bestiality, and "men's teeth are a sign of their ferocity."²⁸ "If in all the faculties a single doctor of chemistry and philosophy could be found, we should no longer be obliged to sit down to these disgusting orgies. He would prepare for us extracts of

meat, containing only what is in sympathy and affinity with our bodies. . . . Being no longer weighed down by the slow processes of digestion, men would become singularly agile, their sight would become wonderfully keen, and they would see ships gliding on the seas of the moon."²⁹ After this ethereal gospel the Abbé and his pupil Jacques get into a brawl over a girl, kill a lord, hide in the woods, and then kidnap Jaël, pretty daughter of the Jewish scholar Mosaïde. But Mosaïde pursues and stabs the Abbé to death; and thereby hangs the tale.

Across the centuries Anatole France sees essentially the same thing always—a man pursuing a maid. *The Red Lily* (1894) is another study of sense and sin, graced with the comments of that gentle Epicurean (formed, it would seem, on the matrix of Verlaine).—Choulette. Anatole believes that wisdom is a mixture of philosophy and love, and that the greater of these is love. "No one has been able to show me precisely the right way. . . . The feeling for the beautiful leads me. What man is certain of having found a better guide? . . . If I had to choose between beauty and truth I should not hesitate; it is beauty that I should keep. . . . There is nothing true in the world except beauty."³⁰ Sensuality is the basis of artistic sensibility, and makes three-quarters of the genius of great artists.³¹ So Anatole, in this stage of his development, is shamelessly Epicurean, naïvely sensual, like a child who finds Utopia in his thumb. He does not recognize sin, but only error; "Chris-

tianity has done much for love by making a sin of it."³² He quotes with zest "the prayer which a fine lass of the Genoese Riviera addressed to the Madonna: 'Holy Mother of God, who didst conceive without sin, grant me the grace of sinning without conceiving.'"³³ Nicias professes sensuality, Paphnutius is possessed with it without knowing it. Anatole admits that "everything is paid for in this world, and pleasure most of all;"³⁴ nevertheless, he "invariably advocates pleasure as superior to every kind of denial of nature, and he combats the theory that there is good in suffering."³⁵ "Let us not listen to the priests who teach the excellence of suffering" he tells a working-class audience: "for it is joy which is good. . . . Let us not fear joy, and when a beautiful thing or a smiling thought offers us pleasure, let us not refuse it."³⁶

Being an Epicurean in metaphysics as well as in morals, and believing with Epicurus that all things are composed of atoms variously arranged, he "highly approves of the arrangement of the atoms of which woman is composed."³⁷ It is true that he says almost the opposite occasionally: "I have noticed," says M. de Terremonde, "that well-made women" "There are hardly any," says the Doctor. "Doctor, you remind me of my chiropodist. . . . 'If you were a chiropodist,' he says, 'you would take no stock in women.'"³⁸ Nevertheless Anatole is a willing slave to beauty, and regrets only that it has a tongue. In his little play, "The Man Who Married a Dumb Wife" (an elaboration of Rabelais) he tells of a

judge who finds, after much seeking, a surgeon who can restore to his wife her long-lost power of speech. "Bring my looking-glass," says the wife, on feeling her tongue loosened; and—"You old goose, you shall give me a new satin gown and a velvet-trimmed cape for my birthday."³⁹ And she enters upon such a Niagara of talk that the judge, to preserve his sanity, begs the surgeon to undo his operation; and when he is told that this would be illegal he arranges to have himself operated upon for the removal of his hearing.

It is difficult to discover just what has been Anatole France's fortune with the deadly sex: he has paid women the compliment of marrying twice; but some bitter disappointment lurks in such a sentence as—"To hope to leave a memory in the heart of a woman is to wish to stamp the imprint of a seal on the face of running water."⁴⁰ Perhaps, he says, women maltreat men rightly, revenging themselves because they are loved not for their own sake but for merely sensual satisfaction. "One must not be an egoist in love," Jaël warns Jacques; "that is what men do not well understand. But we teach them."⁴¹ And in his own person Anatole writes: "Woman forms the great educating influence for man; she it is who trains him in the gifts that charm—courtesy, discretion, and the pride that shudders to be self-assertive. She it is who teaches a few the art of pleasing, and all the useful art of not displeasing."⁴²

The ideal woman, he thinks, would be one who mystified and fascinated while her beauty shone, and then departed to a nunnery. Per-

haps woman was nappier under the sway of a supernatural religion than she can be in an age of science and scepticism. Anatole apostrophises woman:

"To make of you the fearful and wonderful thing you are today, to become the indifferent and sovereign cause of countless sacrifices and crimes, you still needed two things: civilization, which gave you veils, and religion, which gave you scruples. Since then your powers are perfected; you are now a mystery, and you are a sin. . . . Candidly, I do not think rationalism is good for you. In your place I should not be fond of the physiologists, who are so indiscreet, . . . who say you are sick when we think you are inspired. . . . That is not the way they speak of you in the Golden Legend; 'white dove,' 'lily of purity,' 'rose of love,' are the names they give you there. Surely this is more agreeable than to be dubbed hysterical, cataleptic, subject to hallucinations, as you are every day since science ruled the roost. . . . Take care, I say: already you have stripped off some particles of your mystery and your fascination."⁴³

V. THE SCEPTIC

Anatole France neglected Montaigne's warning: *Ne plus sapias quam necesse est, ne obstupescas*,—"Do not be wiser than is necessary, lest you become stupid." He studied almost everything, only to find out that he knew almost nothing. All education is a weakening of certainties; as soon as a man begins to reason the whole structure of belief begins to crack. "It is necessary to have sound views before having any views at all; for after that it is too late."⁴⁴ So Anatole doubts every-

thing; and Michaut properly calls *The Garden of Epicurus* "a manual for unbelievers." He goes beyond Taine and Renan, Gassendi and Montaigne; for whereas they believed nothing, he professes to accept all, and thinks that among all the philosophies and religions there is little to choose, and one may as well swallow them wholesale, as Hobbes advised. This is a bitterer scepticism than any doubt.

He loves Catholicism, as ones loves the place of his youth; but he has no delusions about its dogmas. The various creeds are only "very ancient systems of astrology and arithmetic, police regulations . . . cookery receipts and sanitary precepts, primitive agricultural maxims, and rudimentary rules of good behavior."⁴⁵ As for design, the universe astonishes him more by its incoherence than by its order and harmony. There may be a single chain that binds the world into a universe, but "in truth the rings of the chain are in places so entangled that the devil himself could not unravel them, logician though he be."⁴⁶ If there be a chain it is one of blind and ruthless determinism. In the story *La Muiron*, Anatole represents Napoleon as saying: "No man escapes his fate. Brutus, who was a mediocrity, believed in the power of the human will. A greater man does not harbor that illusion. He sees the necessity which limits him. . . . Children are rebellious. A great man is not. What is human life? The curve traced by a projectile."⁴⁷

We live on a drop of mud which revolves around a bubble of gas. Very probably

"there is no more repose in the spaces of the sky than on the earth; the same law of strife and struggle governs the infinitude of the universe. . . . To live is to destroy, to act is to injure. . . . The order of the universe is strife and murder, the blind interplay of hostile forces. She destroys herself; and the more I think of things, the more I am convinced that the universe is mad. . . . Nature, my only mistress, and my only instructress, offers me no suggestion to the effect that a man's life is of any value; on the contrary she teaches me in all kinds of ways that it has none. The sole end and object of living beings is to serve as food for other beings destined to the same end. . . . I would fain believe that organic life is an evil peculiar to this wretched little planet of ours. It is a ghastly idea that in the infinitude of heaven they eat and are eaten in endless succession."⁴⁸

In short, "the world is a tragedy, by an excellent poet."⁴⁹ He tells of a brute who, to win a wager of a bottle of wine, threw into the Seine the girl with whom he lived.⁵⁰ And in another story he mingles with his pessimism his distaste for literary inflation: A king, told that he has only a few more years to live, commissions a corps of savants to write for him the history of the world, that he may learn it before he dies; after a year, his illness having increased, he asks them to report, and is told that they are still engaged upon the history of pre-historic times; he begs them to concentrate their material and present it to him soon; but when, a few months later, he is near death, and asks for their results, he finds them still unprepared; at last, dying, he

begs the wisest of the historians to tell him briefly the history of the world; and the historian answers: "They were born, they suffered, and they died."

Anatole sees nothing to admire in nature and history except their unconscious humor. Nothing could be funnier than the hypocrisies, delusions and infatuations of men. We are food for the laughter of the gods. Surely, after making us, Jehovah must have looked at his work and seen that it was bad. "Never did artisan treat objects produced by his industry with more disgust and aversion. He thought of destroying them, and indeed he drowned the greater part of them in the flood, as they deserved."⁵¹ "We are nothing, my son, but animated pottery," says the Abbé Coignard. Indeed, seeing what a sorry world it is, the supreme joke is the unfailing industry with which men replace every death with one or more births, and follow every devastating war with renewed fertility. "It is certainly very unreasonable to bring little unfortunates into the world," says M. Bonnard to his housekeeper. "But the thing is done every day, my dear Therese, and all the philosophers on earth will never be able to reform the silly custom."⁵² (Our own philosopher had one child, the pretty Suzanne, who married a grandson of Ernest Renan, lost him in the War, and died in 1918.⁵³) And so, Anatole sadly concludes, it will continue till the sun ceases to give heat and the earth to give food; men will begin to starve; civilization will disappear; and "the last inhabitant of the earth will be as destitute

and ignorant, as feeble and dull-witted, as the first." Other species will supplant man as the lords of creation. There are invertebrates less sensitive to cold than man is. Who can foretell the future reserved for their activity and patience? Who knows if the earth may not become good for them when it has ceased to be habitable by us?⁵⁴

Everything is doomed to be superseded sooner or later; the law of death is written across the face of life. "I acquired a profound consciousness of the passing of things and the nothingness of it all. I divined that men were but changing images in the universal illusion, and from that day I was inclined to sadness, gentleness, and pity."⁵⁵ He says of Coignard—"tenderly he despised men."⁵⁶ And he repeats with affection his favorite formula: "Let us give to men, for their witnesses and judges, Irony and Pity."⁵⁶

His scepticism of science is as ruthless as his scepticism of theology. For scepticism is its own nemesis; to make a principle of doubt is to drive one's self back always to one's starting-point, and beyond. Anatole France, like Taine and Renan, had begun with faith in the mission and power of science to cleanse and reform the world; but that faith too he at last abandoned. "I hate science, for having loved it too much, after the manner of voluptuaries who reproach women with not having come up to the dreams which they formed of them."⁵⁷ Science deals with matter, space, and time: i. e., with unknowables, perhaps non-entities. We know only one reality—thought;

outside of man all is unknowable, and within him all is mystery; "we seek, and we only find ourselves."⁵⁸ Science is powerless because it cannot change human nature; and what is changed if that remains the same? Renan believed that science "would change the world because it can tunnel mountains. . . . He surrendered himself with smiling alacrity to the dream of a scientific morality."⁵⁹ But education does not increase goodness, it only increases cleverness. Since the development of universal education corruption and deceit have ruled the world.

And philosophy is just as impossible as science. "The systems constructed by the sages are only tales invented to amuse the eternal childhood of man. . . . After the example of the Greeks, I like stories, and take pleasure in what the poets and the philosophers say. Philosophy and literature are the Thousand and One Nights of the West."⁶⁰ As for Anatole, he scorns to make a system of his own; he prefers to tell the meandering story of some old scholar—some Bonnard, or Coignard, or Bergeret, or Trublet, or Brotteaux—and to put into their mouths his happy or unhappy thoughts. The story itself is nothing to him, the play of ideas is the thing. An editor confused the instalments of a book by Anatole France, and published them in wrong order: nobody noticed the error, not even the author.⁶¹ Such a method has the charm of *causerie*, and escapes the obligation of consistency. Anatole knows that there are contradictions in his thought; and makes no undue effort to resolve

them; on the contrary, "he contemplates in peace their eternal war,"⁶² as if his thought but faithfully mirrored the contradictoriness of things. "Each of us must be allowed to possess two or three philosophies at the same time; for unless you have created a doctrine, there is no reason for believing that any single one is good."⁶³ He thinks that the wisest of all utterances was Pilate's question about truth; and he does not think that men will answer it. Fra Giovanni, in *The Human Tragedy*, dreams of a many-colored disc that becomes white as it revolves; it is a symbol of truth, which is a composite of contradictions. Anatole believes with Montaigne that "to die for an idea is to set a pretty high value on conjectures."⁶⁴ "Theories are created and put into the world only to suffer from the facts which encounter them, only to be torn member from member, to be inflated, and at last to burst like a balloon."⁶⁵

"It is not by reflection and intellect but by feeling that one attains to the highest and the purest truths. . . . Thought is a frightful thing. It is the acid which dissolves the universe; and if all men were set to thinking at once, the world would immediately cease to exist. But this misfortune is not to be feared. . . . The truths discovered by the intellect remain sterile. . . . It is folly to try to move masses of men by reason. Prejudices, like laws and governments, can be destroyed only by forces blind, deaf, slow, and irresistible. . . . As a whole, the human race is possessed of an instinctive hatred of the intellect. It is engendered by the vague, deep-seated conviction that such hostility is

in its best interests. . . . The scientific verities which penetrate the average mind sink as though in a swamp, and drown. They cause no upheaval, and are powerless to destroy error and prejudice. Truths of the Laboratory, which hold sovereign sway over you and me, have no authority over the minds of the public. . . . Science has never harmed religion, and the absurdity of a religious practice may be clearly demonstrated without lessening the number of people who indulge in it. Scientific truths are not acceptable to the public. Nations live on mythology; from legends they draw all the ideas which are necessary to their existence. They do not need many, and a few simple fables suffice to gild millions of lives. In short, truth has no hold on mankind. . . . Truth has so many points of inferiority to falsehood as practically to be doomed to extinction. . . . Bernadotte of Lourdes has set countless pilgrims on the march and drawn thousands of millions to a mountain in the Pyrenees. And my revered friend Pierre Lafitte assures me that we have entered upon a period of positive philosophy. . . . The science of our day will bring forth superstitions. . . . Religions are coming into being under our very eyes. . . . They claim to found their beliefs on science. . . . Yet all things are possible—even the triumph of truth.”⁶⁶

Anatole concludes that “the joy of understanding is a sad joy.” Ignorance is a necessary condition of human happiness, and it must be admitted that in most cases we fulfill it well.”⁶⁷ The ancients wisely considered prophecy as a dark and fatal gift; and the unhappy Cassandra figured their belief. “If

it were possible for us to see what is to come, there would be nothing left for us but to die."⁶⁸ M. Bergeret, says Anatole, is to be pitied, for he thinks. "It is a great misfortune, especially in the country."⁶⁹ "God preserve you from thinking, my son," says Coignard to his pupil, "as he has preserved his greatest saints and the souls whom he loves with especial tenderness and destines to eternal felicity."⁷⁰

Nevertheless, Anatole France loves the pains of thought. "As believers who have attained a high moral perfection taste the joys of renunciation, so the savant, persuaded that all about us is but vain show and pretense, drinks deep of this philosophic sadness, and forgets himself in the delights of a calm despair—a profound and noble mournfulness, which those who have once tasted it would not exchange for all the frivolous gayeties and empty hopes of the vulgar herd."⁷¹ After all, it is so agreeable to philosophize! He repeatedly quotes the scholar who said that "we are weary of everything except the joys of understanding;" and he pronounces thought "the greatest of man's adventures."⁷² Thought is greater than action: "If Napoleon had been as intelligent as Spinoza he would have lived in a garret and written four books."⁷³ He translates lovingly a fragment of Epicurus: "Happy is he who possesses knowledge! He does not seek to usurp power from his fellow-citizens; he does not meditate an unjust act. Contemplating eternal nature, the unalterable order, the origin and the elements of things, his soul is stained by no shameful desire."⁷⁴ In truth, nothing is so

noble as thought. "The wonder is not that the field of the stars is so vast, but that man has measured it. . . . The earth is but a grain of sand in the barren infinity of worlds; yet if it is only on the earth that creatures suffer, it is greater than all the rest of the universe put together."⁷⁵

*The Human Tragedy*⁷⁶ is the record of Anatole France in this second period, the story of the rise and fall of his soul. He pictures the piety and happiness of the gentle Fra Giovanni; and tells how Satan destroyed this simple bliss by teaching the young monk how to think. "I will afflict these monks by telling them the truth," says His Nether Majesty, "and I will sadden them by pronouncing the discourses of reason. I will thrust thought like a sword into their hearts. And when they shall know the truth they will be unhappy. For there is no joy without illusion, and peace is to be found only in ignorance." So he introduces Giovanni to a worker who reveals to the youth the wrongs and sufferings involved in the economic arrangements of modern society. The soul of the monk is touched and fired, and he goes down into the cities to preach the new gospel of social justice. The next day he is in jail, brooding over civic liberties and economic slavery. The devil comes and talks theology with him, and Giovanni's arguments become warmer as his doubts increase. Suddenly his faith leaves him like a fallen garment, and he shivers in the cold air of denial with which Satan has surrounded him. He suffers, but with pride;

he is grateful for this bitter disillusionment; and as he follows Satan up the mountain-side he says to him: "Lo! I am a miserable man, because I have followed after you, Prince of men. . . . Through you I suffer, and I love you. I love you because you are my misery and my pride, my joy and my sorrow, the splendor and the cruelty of things; because you are desire and speculation. . . . I have tasted the fruit of knowledge of good and evil. . . . I love you because through you I am damned." And leaning on the Archangel's shoulder, he wept bitterly."

There is no doubt that Anatole France suffered some wounds of the spirit from his break with the creed of his youth. There was so much of the milk of human kindness in him, mingled with the lust for philosophy and meditation, that nature seemed to have formed him for a priest; and even to the end, despite his doubts, he had something of the Trappist monk about him, and called himself "a pawky Benedictine."⁷⁷ His home at the Villa Saïd had stained-glass windows, and his library was built like the interior of a chapel.⁷⁸ "He wore a long dressing-gown of clerical cut. . . . He always wore a skull-cap like the priests in chapel;" and sometimes he looked for all the world like a rabbi vowed to the Talmud. He was "an enthusiastic collector of religious objects. There was nobody in the world with more ecclesiastical tastes. . . . Pyxes, chalices, monstrances, patens and censers filled many cabinets to overflowing."⁷⁹ His ears could never forget the music of the old liturgy, nor

his eyes the splendor of the ancient ceremonies; Catholicism murmured in the depths of his soul like the bells of a **sunken cathedral**. He was still another of that line of great Frenchmen of whom Ste.-Beuve so aptly said that they would remain Catholics long after they had ceased to be Christians.

He had everything of religion except theology and the conviction of sin. He loved the old legends which his mother had poured into him, he liked nothing so much, apparently, as to revel in the esoteric subtleties of the theology which he condemned. "He adored the mysterious, though he did not believe in it;"³⁰ it was a relief to him from the banality of the real. He was always interrupting himself to tell the story of some saint,—as of "Aloysius Gonzaga, whose modesty was so great . . . that he could not remain alone in a room with his mother without blushing."³¹ It was part cause of his melancholy, no doubt, that these legends, which were so beautiful, were not also true. His feelings remained almost untouched by his thinking; in a sense he too, like another pagan, was *anima naturaliter Christiana*. Sometimes he spoke as if on slight temptation he would open up his heart again to the ancient faith.

"Far from being glad when I see some time-honored fallacy exploded, I think of the new one that will come and take its place; and I ask myself the question, Will it not perhaps be more inconvenient and dangerous than the other? On full and sufficient consideration, the old prejudices are less baneful than the new; time, by long usage, has

given them a polish, and made them almost innocent. . . . As long as man is suckled at a woman's breast, he will be consecrated in the temple and initiated into some mystery of the divine. He will have his dream. And what matter that the dream be false, provided it be fair? Is it not the destiny of man to sink in an everlasting illusion? And is not this illusion the very condition of life?"⁸²

VI. THE SOCIALIST

Behind this tender cynicism and this brilliant despair lay not only the uprooting of a cherished belief, but the apparent destruction of a beloved nation. No one is so patriotic as a Frenchman; and perhaps, on the side of culture, no one has better reason. Imagine a young man of twenty-seven, passionately devoted to his country and his city, hearing of the disaster at Sedan, watching the siege and capture of Paris, the despondent violence of the Communards, and their ruthless wholesale execution by the victorious bourgeoisie; imagine, again, the mature man of forty witnessing the decadence of French statesmanship, the corruption of French politics, the rise to power of an unlettered plutocracy, and the silent return of a religious reaction that had captured the army and the aristocracy, and through them threatened to capture the state: what an indecency optimism would have been in those unhappy days! They were, for France, years of atonement, of sober retrenchments in power and pride, and of dark-draped statues recalling a glory gone. It was too much to ask that a mind formed in that turbulent and

ignoble epoch should have risen to good cheer in politics or in philosophy.

Perhaps Anatole France had read too much history to be anything but a sceptic in politics. He smiled at men's hopes of democracy; men are still too near the brute to be the self-ruled freemen of a just society. The Abbé Coignard would not have signed the Declaration of the Rights of Man, "because of the sharply defined and unjust distinction made in it between man and the gorilla." "Whoever meddles with the government of mankind," says Anatole, gently, "should remember that they are monkeys." Says the Abbé again:

"Changing forms of government is the most frivolous and empty method of using one's intelligence. . . . Startling changes are merely displacements of particular men, and men taken in the mass are like one another, average in evil as well as in good. . . . I notice that after reforms men are as before—selfish, avaricious, cruel, cowardly, stupid, and frivolous by turns; and that there is always the same number of births, marriages, deceived husbands, and gallows-birds,—in which is made manifest the beautiful ordering of our society."⁸³

All progress, thinks Anatole, is slow and regular: "There will be no vast changes, and there never have been,—I mean rapid and sudden changes. All economic transformations have the kindly gradual operation characteristic of all natural forces."⁸⁴ The dependence of each condition of society upon its predecessor insures a graduation of development. He

compares this to Lyell's "unformitarian" theory in geology—that changes in the earth's surface come not by sudden eruptions but by slow erosion here and slow elevation there. "It strikes one what benefits this theory of subsisting causes would bring in its train, if it could be transferred from the physical to the moral" and political sphere. "The spirit of conservatism and the spirit of revolution would there find a common ground of reconciliation."⁸⁵ They found such reconciliation in his own philosophy, which was as radical as any in its advocacy of change, and as conservative as any in its condemnation of haste and violence.

The earlier mood, however, was almost entirely conservative. "A skeptic never revolts against the laws, for he has no hope that better ones can be made."⁸⁶ "Good and evil," says Nicias, "exist only in our opinion. The wise man has only custom and usage to guide him in his actions. I conform with all the prejudices of my time. That is why I pass for an honest man."⁸⁷ Anatole France believed, in those days, that the strong would forever exploit the weak, and that the weak would forever console themselves with heavens and Utopias. He protected himself, meanwhile, from his own ethical and esthetic sensibility by resolving to remain, as far as possible, rather a spectator of life than a warrior for such hopeless causes as freedom, justice, or truth. "I have always been inclined to regard life as a spectacle; I am a born sight-seer."⁸⁸ So he passed among human affairs like a tour-

ist through the Louvre; he told stories not as one interested in the issues, but as one sitting apart and at ease, looking down Olympially from some cloud or mountain-top, like an Epicurean god. He had achieved *aequanimitas* and *ataraxia*,—a peace of mind that could not be disordered or disturbed.

And then, in 1895, came the Dreyfus case. A Jewish officer in the French army had been charged with selling military secrets to Germany; had been condemned, degraded, and deported to Devil's Island, off French Guiana. Frenchmen who could be patriots without hating other peoples, investigated, and reported that in their judgment the incriminating papers had been forged. The courageous Zola braved all the powers of obscurantism and respectability by sharply challenging the forgers in "J'Accuse." Now Anatole France had in time past written very bitter criticism of Zola's novels; had said, for example, that it was better for Zola if he had never been born. But this was a matter in which Zola was right; and Anatole, who had more to lose than any writer in France, did not hesitate to come to Zola's support. On the morning after the publication of "J'Accuse," Paris was startled by the appearance of the "Protestation des Intellectuels" (1898); and it was amazed to find, high up among the signers, the name of Anatole France.

What had moved him to leap so suddenly from his ivory tower upon the battlefield? Partly, no doubt, his friendship with some of the leading Jewish writers and students of the day; but, more, his hatred of bigotry and in-

tolerance. He loved legends, but as legends; let the Church threaten to reassume its old prestige and despotism, and this apparently unconcerned spectator would not be too skeptical to fight. He saw behind the injustice to Dreyfus the control of the army by the Church, and an omen of the use of the army to restore the ancient regime. The Voltaire that had been dormant in him rose at the challenge, and once again the forces of superstition and reaction felt the sting of French satire and the bite of French wit. Anatole France now poured out books and pamphlets in a flood of wrath; he forged out of his gentle humor a relentless polemic, and out of his smooth pen a sword. In speech after speech he faced without fear the chauvinism of the mob; and though the crowd stood outside his house to jeer and denounce him, he fought on, with the others, till Dreyfus was retried, and acquitted, and reinstated, and the battle was won on every point. It was this test that revealed the man: behind the skeptic a believer with his own warm faith; behind the dilettante a warrior; behind the Epicurean a lover and a brother.

The *Histoire Contemporaine* is the record of his conversion, and of his development, in this third period, from an indolent spectator to an impassioned participant. *The Elm-Tree on the Mall* (1897), *The Wicker-Work Woman* (1898), *The Amethyst Ring* (1899), and *M. Bergeret a Paris* (1901) are the purposely aimless titles of this trilogy; in which the intrigues of the anti-Dreyfusards form the ephemeral scaffolding for the rival philosophies of a professor and his dog.

For M. Bergeret and his Riquet are the heroes of this intellectual Odyssey. The dog is perhaps the more illuminating thinker of the two, because he sees human affairs without human prejudice; and while M. Bergeret analyzes God and the state, Riquet quietly dissects M. Bergeret and man. In "The Thoughts of Riquet" we have the dog's philosophy:

"Men, animals, and stones grow larger as they approach me, and become enormous when they are quite close. It is not so with me. I remain the same size wherever I am. . . . The smell of a dog is a delicious smell. . . . I speak when I choose. From my master's mouth, too, issue sounds which have a kind of meaning. But their meaning is less plain than that which I express with my voice. Everything uttered by my voice means something. But from my master's mouth comes much nonsense."

Here is imagination and a delicately subtle shadowing of the prejudices of men. Observe, again, the sympathetic insight of the passage which describes Riquet's part in the transfer of M. Bergeret's belongings to Paris.

"During the days of the removal, Riquet roamed sadly through the devastated rooms . . . Strange, ill-clad, fierce and insulting men troubled his repose. . . . Chairs were taken from him as soon as he lay upon them, and carpets were abruptly dragged from beneath his persecuted body, so that in his own home he no longer knew where to lay his head."⁸⁹

Besides Riquet, M. Bergeret has a wife, who is less faithful to him. "'Tis only wise men

that are deceived," Fra Giovanni had said.⁹⁰ M. Bergeret, having found his wife comfortably seated in the lap of a friend, says nothing, and reduces her to despair by the unprecedented and inhuman trick of thereafter totally ignoring her existence. At last she chooses the interesting disgrace of a divorce in preference to this intolerable silence; and is replaced by the savant's sister, the virtuous and imperturbable Zoe.

Gradually, in these four volumes, M. Bergeret evolves like his creator from a leisurely conservative to an aroused rebel who is not above shouldering a musket—or at least grasping a pen—in the cause of righteousness. He still scorns democracy, and abhors revolution; but something has touched him into feeling.

"It is only the crazy and the ambitious who make revolutions. . . . To tell the truth, I do not attach any special importance to the form of the state. Changes of government make little change in the conditions of individuals. We do not depend on constitutions or on charters, but on instincts and morals. . . . No, I don't believe that men are naturally good. What I see is that they are emerging painfully and very slowly from their primitive barbarism, and that with great effort they are organizing a justice that is uncertain and a charity that is precarious. The time is yet far distant when they will be kind and gentle to one another. The time is yet far distant when they will not war upon one another, and when pictures representing battle-scenes will be hidden away as affording an immoral and shameful spectacle. . . . But I also believe that men

are least ferocious when they are least wretched, that in the long run the progress of industry will produce a certain softening of manners. . . . I anticipate that salvation will come from machinery itself. . . . The spark that flashed from the Leyden jar, the little subtle star that revealed itself in the eighteenth century to the wonder-stricken philosopher, will accomplish this miracle. . . . Science, not the people, possesses sovereign power; a stupidity repeated by 36,000,000 mouths does not for that reason cease to be stupid. Majorities, as a general rule, display a superior capacity for servitude. Among the weak weakness is multiplied in proportion to number. Mobs are always inert. They possess a little energy only when they are starving. . . . And how can we change the world? By the force of speech. . . . Nothing is more powerful. . . . It is an invincible weapon, without which the world would belong to armed brutes. What keeps them in abeyance? Merely thought, naked and weaponless. . . . It is thought which rules the world."⁹¹

In Paris M. Bergeret makes the acquaintance of the socialist and carpenter, Roupart, who comes to fix M. Bergeret's shelves and to tell him of the thousand-and-one varieties of radicals in Paris. "There aren't many socialists hereabouts," he says sadly, "and the few there are don't agree."⁹² He thanks the professor for coming to the defense of Dreyfus: "You did something quite out of the common; you cut your own class, and refused to have any truck with the brass hats and the sky pilots" (the army and the church). "I hate forgers, my

lad," says M. Bergeret; "surely that is permissible in a philologist?"⁹³

The entrance of Roupart was a symbol of the *union sacrée* of labor and the intellectuals in defense of Dreyfus; and it was a sign of Anatole's conversion to socialism. He had always sympathized with simple people; now he found his heart going out more and more, despite his skeptical head, to their apparently Utopian aspirations. He abandoned his notion of art for art's sake, and was happy to devote his genius to the cause of the oppressed. He took membership in the Socialist Party, which was to become, in the year of his death, the most powerful party in France; and he gave his services as speaker without stint or pride. Like William Morris in England, he let himself be taken to little out-of-the-way halls to speak to men and women tired and discouraged with toil and defeat. Perhaps there is nothing more beautiful in the history of literature than this picture of the great artist, the honored academician, coming down to the platforms of the people, and taking their side against the mighty. He met with the usual contumely: the Government sent *agents provocateurs* to his meetings, to discredit him with shouts of "Long live anarchism!"—but even that word could not frighten this scorner of all force. Paul Gsell describes him at this stage, when the old philosopher had become a political campaigner: "At a public meeting he has difficulty in finding words. He reads his speeches. He intones them in a nasal voice which is not lacking in solemnity. If he has to improvise

he stammers, and loses his head. The emotion itself is the most delicate compliment to the audience, which, proud of intimidating a man of genius, applauds him frantically."⁹⁴

He was not quite certain that the socialists were right in what they proposed, but he agreed with them heartily in what they condemned. He had long since denounced militarism, for example; and he looked upon conscription as perhaps the greatest of contemporary evils. He had made Choulette say:

"Conscription is a hideous invention of modern times. . . . To make killing an obligation on every man is the shame of emperors and republics, the crime of crimes. In ages which we call barbarous, towns and princes entrusted their defense to mercenaries who waged war with admirable prudence; there were perhaps some five or six men killed in a great battle. And when the knights went out to war, they were, at least, uncompelled; they had themselves killed for the pleasure of it; and undoubtedly they were not good for much else. No one, in the days of St. Louis, would have dreamed of sending to the front a man of learning and wisdom; nor would they have thought of snatching the laborer from the fields to force him into battle. But now we tell a man that it is an honor for him to be so conscripted; and if he does not like this kind of honor we shoot him. He yields because he is subject to fear; and because man is of all domestic animals the most timidly accommodating. . . . It is to be remarked that our clothes have great influence on our moral being. . . . It is enough to give a coward a bear-skin cap to make him go and

get his head broken in the king's service. . . . Civilized nations are like hunting-dogs. A perverted instinct drives them to destroy without profit or reason. . . . The truth is, that men of a common faith have no more urgent desire than to exterminate those who think differently, particularly if the difference is very slight."⁹⁵

Behind militarism is imperialism, the desire to establish imperial and autocratic authority over the lands and lives of simple peoples who have the misfortune of possessing valuable natural resources without an army or a navy.

"Fra Giovanni knew that the man who sells is the enemy of the man who buys, and that the art of trade is more mischievous, if possible, than the art of war. . . . The discovery of the West Indies, the exploration of Africa, the navigation of the Pacific Ocean, opened up vast territories to European greed. The white kingdoms joined issue over the extermination of the red, yellow, and black; and for a space of four centuries gave themselves up madly to the pillaging of three great divisions of the world. This is what is styled modern civilization."

Anatole calls it the White Peril.⁹⁶

His writings, during the first five years of the new century, were colored and heated with socialism. He spoke of a *préfet* who "felt before 'property' that kind of religious terror which the moon inspires in dogs;" he laughed bitterly at "the law," which "in its majestic equality, forbids the rich as well as the poor to sleep under bridges, to beg in the streets, and to steal bread;" and he made one of his shorter

masterpieces, *Crainquebille* (1902), a cameo of protest. An old street-peddler, too slow to move on at a gendarme's bidding, is arrested and falsely charged with having flung at the officer the war-cry of Parisian police-haters.—“Mort aux Vaches!” In court the officer lies so efficiently that Crainquebille wonders did he not say the thing after all? After serving a year in prison he comes out broken-hearted, and so poor in health that he can find no work that wants him; and other peddlers have long since captured his old customers. At last, in starving desperation, and hoping to find in jail the food that he cannot get outside of it, he confronts an officer and carefully pronounces in his face the cry that will surely bring him a sentence—“Mort aux Vaches!” But the policeman shrugs his shoulders scornfully, and passes on.

In *The White Stone* (1905) Anatole France offers us his Utopia. There is a “total suppression of private property” in the means of production. Mating and marriage are left quite free, and all children are supported by society. The entire continent of Europe is united under one socialist government; England alone stands aloof, but not untouched. “While having become socialistic she still retained her king, her lords, and even the wigs of her judges.”⁹⁷ Of course, there remains much room for progress: “there are still among us, as before, voracious and prodigal, industrious and idle, rich and poor, happy and miserable, contented and discontented, men. Yet all manage to exist, and that is already something.”⁹⁸

In such admissions the old skeptic betrayed himself as not quite submerged by the socialist; only Anatole France could smilingly inform us that even in Utopia there will be unhappy people. One suspects that this was not his real Eden; that in his heart he was an individualist; perhaps, in his gentle philosophic way, an anarchist. He loved to think "of that maker of pipes whom William Morris presents to us in that fine Utopian story of his, that simple-hearted craftsman who, in the city of the future, made pipes which surpassed all others in beauty, because he brought love to the making of them."⁹⁹ The same individuality which made him averse to system in philosophy and to dogma in science and religion made him doubtful of a paradise in which the government would be ubiquitous and supreme.

In his popular addresses he ignored difficulties and distinctions; one must take sides, as Voltaire said. But "when the ardor of battle began to cool, Anatole France returned very soon to his uncertainties, his beloved indecision. . . . He had not the forwardness, the front and mouth of brass, which are necessary to party-leaders."¹⁰⁰ He remained the student, unpolitical and impolitic, unwedded to any dogma, ready to survey friends and enemies alike with undeceivable eye, and to laugh at both of them,—as he does in *Penguin Isle* (1908).

This is his most sustained and powerful satire, whose modest scope is a symbolic history of France. An old missionary, Father Maël, comes upon some penguins whom he mistakes

for a new race of men; he preaches the Gospel to them, and touched by their attention, baptizes them. Thereupon all heaven is thrown into consternation, for it is against divine law to baptize any but men; a learned theological discussion ensues; and finally it is decreed that to save both the letter of the law and Father Maël's face, the penguins shall be changed into men, by a sort of divinely-accelerated Darwinism. Father Maël, after this concentrated evolution, gives the new citizens clothing, with dire results: all the males run after the first clothed female, and ignore the conservative and respectable ladies who are still naked. Possession in woman leads to possession in property; the males fight patriotically for mates and land, and set up laws and boundaries to protect their conquered property. St. Maël is horrified at the greed, jealousy and war which have followed upon his ministrations; but a fellow-monk assures him that the penguins are accomplishing the most august of functions—"they are creating law, they are founding property, they are establishing the bases of civilization." Out of this comes industrialism, which reaches its zenith in the United States. "Houses could never be built high enough; fifteen millions of men toiled in the giant city." One of the learned penguins arrives in New York.

"Having disembarked, he was waited upon by automatons in a hotel forty-eight stories high. Then he took the great railway that led to Gigantopolis, the capital of New Atlantic. In the train there were restaurants, gaming-rooms, athletic arenas, telegraphic,

commercial and financial offices, a Protestant church, and the printing office of a great newspaper. . . . The train passed along the banks of great rivers, through manufacturing cities which concealed the sky with the smoke from their chimneys, towns black in the day, towns red at night, full of noise by day and full of noise also by night.

“ ‘Here,’ thought the doctor, ‘is a people far too much engaged in industry and trade to make war.’ . . . The doctor was brought into the hall of Congress, and cast his look upon the crowd of legislators who were sitting on cane chairs with their feet upon their desks. The president arose, and in the midst of general inattention, muttered. . . . : ‘The war for the opening of the Mongol markets being ended to the satisfaction of the States, I propose that the accounts be laid before the finance committee. . . . Is there any opposition? . . . The proposal is carried. . . . The war for the opening of the markets of Third-Zealand being ended to the satisfaction of the States. . . .’ ‘Have I heard aright?’ asked Professor Obnubile. ‘What? you an industrial people and engaged in all these wars!’ ‘Certainly,’ answered the interpreter; ‘these are industrial wars. . . . The number of wars necessarily increases with our productive capacity. . . . In Third Zealand we have killed two-thirds of the inhabitants in order to compel the remainder to buy our umbrellas and braces.’ At that moment a fat man who was sitting in the middle of the assembly ascended the tribune. ‘I claim,’ said he, ‘a war against the Emerald Republic, which insolently contends with our pigs for the hegemony of hams and sauces in all the markets of the universe.’ ‘Who is

that legislator?" asked Dr. Obnubile. "He is a pig merchant." . . . "What?" asked Obnubile to the interpreter; "you have voted a war with that rapidity and that indifference?" "Oh! it is an unimportant war which will hardly cost eight million dollars." "And men? . . ." "The men are included in the eight million dollars." Then Dr. Obnubile bent his head in bitter reflection. "Since wealth and civilization admit of as many causes of poverty as war and barbarism, since the folly and wickedness of men are incurable, there remains but one good action to be done. The wise man will collect enough dynamite to blow up this planet. When its fragments fly through space an imperceptible amelioration will be accomplished in the universe, and a satisfaction will be given to the universal conscience. Moreover, this universal conscience does not exist."

In Book Six the *Affaire Pyrot* portrays the Dreyfus case, and here the great sceptic laughs even at himself. The story passes on to tell of the rise of organized labor, and the coming of a great revolution; but on the very last page the sceptic overwhelms the socialist, and, describing the rise of another master-class and another system of industrial exploitation, ends the book with an ominous repetition of the very words that had been used to depict the earlier slavery: "Houses could never be built high enough; fifteen millions of men toiled in the giant city."

The truth is, Anatole France had his doubts about revolution. There were two things which he hated as much as his gentle nature could hate anything—those twin evils, violence and intolerance. When Fra Giovanni is in jail,

arrested for a speech against the "Friends of Order," an anarchist prisoner invites him to join his party, saying: "My wish is to destroy the law by violence and compel the citizens to live henceforth in happy freedom. And know further that I have slain both judges and soldiers, and have committed many crimes for the public good." To which Fra Giovanni answers, passionately:

"Ill betide the violent!—for violence ever begets violence. Whoever acts like you is sowing the earth with hatred and fury, and his children shall tear their feet with the wayside briars, and serpents shall bite their heels. Ill betide you, for you have shed the blood of the unjust judge and the brutal soldier, and lo, you are become like the soldier and the judge yourself. Like them you bear on your hands the indelible stain. A fool the man who says, 'We will do evil in our turn, and our hearts shall be comforted. We will be unjust and it shall be the beginning of justice. . . .' If you disobey your masters, let it be by love. Neither fetter nor kill them, but tell them rather, 'I will never slay my brothers, nor throw them into chains.'"¹⁰¹

In *The Gods Are Athirst* (1912) the theme is again the uselessness and ultimate destructiveness of intolerance and violence. The scene is Paris in the days of the Terror; the protagonist is Evariste Gamelin, a Robespierriest who kills suspects with all the self-satisfaction of a Torquemada. Anatole France sees the Revolution red; it is not the oratory that remains with him most, but that quiet punctuator, the guillotine. At bottom, he thinks, the thirst of

the gods for human blood is the thirst of the mob; and Anatole, like every artist, distrusts the mob. He remarks of Georg Brandes that "he has flattered no one—not even the people."

The Revolt of the Angels (1914) is an allegory for every revolution. Satan revolts against God; it is freedom revolting against order, nature against restraint, the individual against society. Satan wins, and sets himself up as God, preaching the old dogmas, and retaining the pope as his vicegerent. "In thee I confirm the right and power to decide matters of doctrine, to regulate the use of the sacraments, to make laws, and to uphold the purity of morals. . . . Thou art infallible. Nothing is changed."¹⁰² Here in three words are the essence and formula of scepticism: Nothing is changed, even if revolution succeeds, even if Satan replaces God. The only note of hope comes in a speech of Satan to his defeated followers.

"Friends, if victory is denied us now, it is because we are neither worthy nor capable of victory. Let us determine wherein we have failed. Nature shall not be ruled, the sceptre of the universe shall not be grasped, except by knowledge alone. It is not blind courage (no one has shown more courage than you) which will win you the courts of heaven; but rather study and reflection. In these silent realms where we are fallen let us meditate, seeking the hidden causes of things; let us observe the course of nature; let us pursue here with compelling ardor and all-conquering desire; let us strive to penetrate her infinite grandeur, her infinite minuteness. . . . When she obeys us we shall be as gods."

VII. THE ARTIST

Anatole France was a philosopher; and the mellow subtlety of his thought, the universality of his interests, and the splendor of his learning have endeared him to those who pursue the elusive delights of speculation. But he was more than a philosopher, more than a scholar and a soldier in the war of human liberation; he was an artist. It is as an artist that he was supreme in his generation, and will be cherished for many centuries in the memory of the initiate.

He merely missed perfection. He was not a master of construction: whereas his shorter stories are of admirable technique, his novels lack unity, and tend to be loosely episodic; only in *Thaïs* did he find the unity of interest, the symmetry of structure, and the inevitability of development which make for faultless form. And he lacked originality of matter: his plots were taken anywhence, with as high a hand as Shakespeare's, and with as good excuse—that he adorned whatever he stole. All ideas, he held, are as old as thought, and belong to everybody; creation is in the form, not in the stuff. Yet *Thaïs* too much recalls Flaubert; and *The Garden of Epicurus* is touched with that fragrant pessimism which we associate with Renan. And lastly, his creations were almost exclusively introspections: he could not forget himself, he could not erect, by the power of his imagination, characters quite unlike his own, as Shakespeare did, or Balzac; no matter

what the name may be,—Servien or Bonnard, Bergeret or Coignard, Vence or Dechartre, Trublet or Brotteaux,—the men are as invariably Anatole as the heroes of Byron are Byron.

But if he lacked something of creative imagination (and he confessed this with admirable simplicity¹⁰³), he atoned for it by the rarity of his re-creative imagination. As if possessed of some miraculous Time-Machine, he moved at will into different epochs of the past, and through patient scholarship and delicate understanding filled those ancient ages with vivid life; through the lenses of his art distant periods grew, and moved up into the near and visible. He saw these alien centuries more clearly than most of us see our own; he described them with a sympathetic penetration which makes the realism of realists seem unfaithful and obscure. He delighted to enter into dead theologies and antique philosophies, and knew their esoteric minutiae as perhaps no other scholar of his time. He could be ruthless in revealing the actual perspective of history, as in "The Procurator of Judea"; but at the same time he felt the beauty of the ancient lore and could show it in his pages as if with the most transparent innocence of belief. He could mercilessly divest the story of Jeanne d'Arc of all miraculous content, and yet present her as the lovably simple girl whose visions stirred a defeated nation to courage and victory.

What he did always—on every page of every book—was to lavish love and care on every line. His religion consisted of an affection for

mankind and a passion for perfect prose. He did not admire, though perhaps he envied, the romantic type of genius which soars on the wings of song, and composes without effort and—without thought. He spent himself on achieving the finished form, believing that form held the secret of artistic immortality. "Form is the golden vase which preserves thought, whose essence is fleeting, for posterity. . . . One survives only by form. . . . To give a new form to a new idea is all of art, and the only creation possible to man."¹⁰⁴

And so he wrote better than any Frenchman of his generation; and his style is a precious perfume that almost dulls the sense with its intoxicating charm. It is a fluid style, compounded of tenderness and disillusionment; as gentle as the dew and as clear as a day in June; a subdued style, quiet, soft, almost languorous and voluptuously beautiful. Take one example: he tells how, reading the Greek classics, "*il voyait des figures divines, des bras d'ivoire tombant sur des tuniques blanches; il entendait des voix plus belles que la plus belle musique, qui se lamentaient harmonieusement.*"—"He saw divine figures, with arms of ivory falling on tunics of pure white; he heard voices more beautiful than the sweetest music, raised in harmonious lamentation."¹⁰⁵ He had that ear for music which seems indispensable for style; his words caress their subject, and his phrases fall of themselves into sombre and gentle harmonies.

His style, again, delights with its clarity and simplicity. French writers, he said, have three

great qualities: clearness, clearness, and clearness;¹⁰⁶ well, Anatole France had all three. "There is a means of attracting which is within the reach of the most humble, and that is naturalness."¹⁰⁷ He could be romantic when he wished, as in speaking of the fingers of a child's hand "like the rosy rays of a star;" but he rather shunned such colored metaphors. "Let us beware of writing too well," he warned; "it is the worst way there is to write."¹⁰⁸

But his was a simplicity that had absorbed complexity, as his clarity had been chiseled painfully out of obscurity. Behind his naïveté is the subtlest irony; his understatement is the shrewdest emphasis. He says of Renan: "If we may believe this amiable shepherd of souls, it is impossible for us to elude divine mercy, and we shall all enter Paradise—unless, indeed, there be no paradise, which is exceedingly probable;"¹⁰⁹ nothing could have better summarized Renan. He likes to build up an imposing paragraph and then, like Heine, to destroy it all with the last word, like some infant architect destroying his toy palaces with imperial nonchalance. Never even in the history of French literature has there been so delicate a poise between subtle thought and transparent phrase; one forgets that it is philosophy, because philosophy is so seldom dressed in such perfect art. This imperceptible union of matter and form, this wedding of wisdom and beauty, constitute the distinctive achievement of Anatole France. His soul was large enough to know the good, the beautiful, and

the true; and his skill sufficed to show them in all the splendor of their natural unity. He was a great artist.

VIII. THE LAST PHASE

When the war came, in 1914, Anatole France, age seventy, offered himself as a volunteer. Not that he loved peace less than before, but France a little more; he could not contemplate with his wonted equanimity the possible destruction of the fairest civilization in the modern world. "What you are defending," he told the soldiers of his country in 1915, "is our immortal patrimony, our mores, our customs, our laws, our habits, our beliefs, and our traditions; the work of our sculptors, our architects, our artists; the song of our musicians; the mother-tongue which for eight centuries has flowed unceasing from the lips of our poets, our writers, our historians, our philosophers. . . . What you are defending is the French genius, which gave the world light and brought the nations liberty."¹¹⁰ It was not the France of Viviani and Millerand and Poincaré that he defended; but the France of Montaigne and Voltaire and Victor Hugo and Renan; he could not bear to think that they should be forgotten, or that France should never again bear their like.

From his dream of a just peace and a united Europe, the Treaty of Versailles awakened him; it filled him almost with despair to see the same men who had brewed the poison on which Europe had gone mad, restored to of-

fice and empowered to prepare another holocaust. He greeted the Russian Revolution with gladness and thanksgiving; whatever its violence and its errors, he thought, this was a challenge in the face of which Western Europe would be compelled to cleanse and renew itself. His friends among the mighty were amazed to hear of his joining the Communists, but not more amazed and chagrined than he had been to see the leaders of his country ape the militarism of the defeated foe; it was his way of telling them that his heart was with the lowly whose blood had been shed, rather than with the great who calmly counted the losses in men and calculated the gains in gold. When, in 1921, he received the Nobel prize for literature, and, returning from Sweden, found that the French Academy had been so shocked by his new affiliations that it had abandoned its plans for tendering him a reception, he smiled with relief, and gathering his simpler friends about him, feasted unconstrained. The victory of the liberals in the year of his death gave new bloom to the hopes that sprang eternally in his young heart.

His splendid home at 5 Villa Saïd was the rendez-vous of Cabinet-members like Caillaux and Painlevé, of geniuses and workingmen. It was a temple of art and friendship, where the master conversed with his disciples, or brooded in solitude over his collected treasures of painting, statuary, and engraving. "With a reverent hand he took the little Cupid, and raising it to his eyes, almost to his lips, he caressed it tenderly."¹¹ When a Russian girl refugee

came to seek protection, she was frightened away by the wealth in which she found herself upon opening his door; she could not see that it was not wealth but beauty. Later, such troubled souls came to him unafraid, and sometimes perhaps too unabashed. "Here," said one young visitor, "is a bomb in two parts. Separated, nothing to fear. If the two halves are screwed together, the whole house blow up." "Do not screw them, please," said Anatole, gently. "And take my word for it, my young friend, as long as there are other means, we must have recourse to them. Remember this: homicidal justice, even when administered by a people struggling for freedom, can never be anything but a wretched substitute. It is not good to quench with blood the thirst of the gods."¹¹²

He had to die, as all things have to die. That we simpler souls should die, that nature should cast us back ruthlessly into the crucible of being and mould us into worthier stuff,—that perhaps we can understand and forgive. But that genius should die, that the creative heart should beat no more, and the creative hand lie forever still, how can we ever forgive that?

When he passed away, on October 12, 1924, his country became magically united by the generous influence of his name. President and Premier joined the line of people who, from morning to evening, filed by his coffin to bid farewell to the man who had upheld, in his generation, the supremacy of French letters. When he was taken to the cemetery at Neuilly,

the five miles of intervening streets were lined five and ten deep with patient thousands that had waited for hours to see the body pass. Not since Victor Hugo's death had France so mourned a son.

Shortly before his death an American magazine had sent to all prominent artists, writers, and critics of the United States a request for a list of the world's greatest geniuses, arranged in the order of their preference. When the replies were averaged the first in standing was Shakespeare. The second was Goethe. The third was Anatole France.

NOTES

(References are, in most cases, to the English translations in the Library Edition of Chapman and May, published by John Lane. Where French titles are given in Italics the reference is to the French edition.)

(1) The Garden of Epicurus, p. 47. (2) He was apparently of purely French ancestry, though some have claimed that there was in his parentage a strain of Jewish blood. (3) *La Vie littéraire*, vol. iii, p. 295. (4) Quoted by J. H. Robinson, *The Mind in the Making*, New York, 1921, p. 64. (5) *On Life and Letters*, vol. i, p. 247. (6) Quoted by Shanks, *Anatole France*, Chicago, 1919, p. 7. (7) *Pierre Nozière*, p. 19. (8) *Little Pierre*, p. 28. (9) *Ibid*, p. 134. (10) Quoted by G. Michaut, *Anatole France*, Paris, 1913, p. 48. (11) *Little Pierre*, p. 51. (12) *Pierre Nozière*, pp. 59, 72; Shanks, p. 22; Brandes, *Anatole France*, New York, 1908, p. 15. (13) *Book of My Friend*, p. 68. (14) *Elm-Tree on the Mall*, p. 13. (15) *The Flower of Life*, in *The Dial* for October, 1921. (16) Michaut, p. xii. (17) *Sylvestre Bonnard*, p. 35. (18) *La Vie littéraire*, vol. i, p. 17. (19) Zola might have returned the charge

by citing Anatole's fondness for women's underwear—e. g., *The Wicker-Work Woman*, p. 210; *The Amethyst Ring*, p. 221. (20) *On Life and Letters*, vol. i, p. viii. (21) *Pierre Noziere*, p. 72. (22) *On Life and Letters*, vol. i, pp. ix and xii. (23) *Ibid.*, vol. ii, p. 233. (24) *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 70. (25) *Thais*, p. 83. Anatole liked to tell of the difficulty which Gollet had with this name in writing the libretto for Massenet's opera. "Gollet confided to me that he would not be able to retain the name of Paphnuce for my hero, because he had difficulty in making it rhyme with noble words. All he could find was *puce* (flea) and *prepuce* (foreskin); and he was not satisfied with that. So he chose another name, Athanael. Athanael rhymes with *ciel* (heaven), *autel* (altar), *irreel* (unreal), *miel* (honey), which are nice words fit for polite society." Gsell, *The Opinions of Anatole France*, New York, 1922, p. 155. (26) *Thais*, p. 207. (27) *Ibid.*, p. 178. (28) *At the Sign of the Reine Pedauque*, pp. 115 and 59. (29) *Ibid.*, p. 50. (30) *On Life and Letters*, vol. ii, preface and p. 113. (31) Quoted by Gsell, p. 180. (32) *The Garden of Epicurus*, p. 17. (33) *On the White Stone*, p. 17. (34) *On Life and Letters*, vol. i, p. 223. (35) Brandes, p. 107. (36) In Shanks, p. 217. (37) *The Gods Are Athirst*, p. 165. (38) *Elm-Tree*, p. 146. (39) *The Man Who Married a Dumb Wife*, p. 51. (40) *Reine Pedauque*, p. 184. (41) *Ibid.*, p. 121. (42) *Garden*, p. 36. (43) *Ibid.*, p. 19. (44) *Penguin Island*, p. 156. (45) *Pierre Noziere*, p. 135. (46) In Michaut, p. 19. (47) In Brandes, p. 57. (48) *Garden*, p. 12; *Wicker-Work Woman*, pp. 190 and 200; *Gods*, pp. 69 and 61. (49) *Thais*, p. 129. (50) *On Life*, vol. ii, p. 75. (51) *Reine Pedauque*, p. 101. (52) Bonnard, p. 10. (53) J. L. May, *Anatole France*, London, 1924, p. 88. (54) *Garden*, pp. 26 and 28. (55) In Shanks, p. 53. (56) In Guérard, *French Civilization in the Nineteenth Century*, London, 1914, p. 13. (57) *The Reflections of Jerome Coignard*, p. 113. (58) *Little Pierre*, p. 110. (59) *Garden*, p. 51. (60) *On Life*, vol. ii, p. 134; Shanks, p. 69. (61) Gsell, p. 108. (62) Michaud, p. 17. (63) *On Life*, vol. ii, p. vi. (64) In Shanks, p. 96. (65) *Le Livre de Mon Ami*, p. 284. (66) *Thais*, p. 175; *La Vie littéraire*, vol. ii, p. 173; *Coignard*, pp. 280 and 30; *Pierre Noziere*, pp. 132

and 135; Amethyst Ring, pp. 143, 146 and 111; Elm-Tree, p. 104. (67) Gods, p. 57; Michaut, p. 34. (68) M. Bergeret in Paris, p. 174. (69) In Michaut, p. 35. (70) In Brandes, p. 5. (71) Garden, p. 120. (72) *La Vie littéraire*, vol. ii, p. 303. (73) M. Bergeret, p. 180. (74) On Life, vol. ii, p. 133. (75) Garden, pp. 16 and 50. (76) This may be obtained, miraculously, for five cents in the "Little Blue Book" Series, No. 219. (77) On Life, vol. i, p. iii. (78) Gsell, p. 17. (79) Ibid., p. 129. (80) Michaut, p. 44. (81) On Life, vol. i, p. 24. (82) Garden, p. 73; Shanks, p. 35. (83) Coignard, pp. 161, 182. (84) Garden, p. 115. (85) Ibid., p. 54. (86) On Life, vol. i, p. vii. (87) Thais, p. 40. (88) Book of My Friend, p. 113. (89) M. Bergeret, p. 12. (90) Human Tragedy, p. 79. (91) Elm-Tree, p. 171; M. Bergeret, pp. 173, 176, 118, and 182. (92) Ibid., p. 64. (93) Ibid. (94) Gsell, p. 235. (95) M. Bergeret, p. 81; Reine Pedauque, p. 80; Amethyst Ring, p. 163. (96) Human Tragedy, p. 68; White Stone, p. 152. (97) Ibid., p. 213. (98) Ibid., p. 238. (99) Little Pierre, p. 61. (100) Michaut, p. 12. (101) Human Tragedy, ch. xi. (102) The Revolt of the Angels, p. 345. (103) Penguin Island, p. 39; *La Vie littéraire*, vol. ii, p. 39. (104) In Michaut, 227-9. (105) *Le Livre de Mon Ami*, p. 170. (106) In Brandes, p. 107. (107) On Life, vol. ii, preface. (108) In Michaut, p. 232. (109) In Brandes, p. 3. (110) In Shanks, p. 209. (111) Gsell, p. 22. (112) Ibid., p. 229.





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